93-00762/

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Delivered on the Occasion

of the Opening of

THE FIRST SESSION

of

THE TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE

of the

PROVINCE OF SASKATCHEWAN

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1991

THE HONOURABLE SYLVIA O. FEDORUK, O.C., S.O.M.
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF SASKATCHEWAN

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly:

A New Beginning

It is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you to the 1st Session of the 22nd Legislature of the Province of Saskatchewan. It is a particular pleasure to welcome those of you who are sitting as Members of the Legislature for the first time.

Election to public office is an honour. The challenges which you face are many and varied, and the responsibilities are great. The people of this province have placed a tremendous trust in each of you. It is the solemn duty of each member to keep the sacred trust of the electorate.

My government accepts with enthusiasm its mandate to provide Saskatchewan people with honest, open, accessible and truly accountable government. A renewed public trust and restored confidence in the traditional values of Saskatchewan community are essential elements in my government's vision for the future.

Appropriations

The primary work of this session will be to provide supply for my government for the remainder of the current fiscal year. My government has the greatest respect for the fundamental tradition that public funds must be appropriated by the Legislature, and that members have the right of grievance before supply. Members will accordingly be asked to take steps to vote supply on the basis of the estimates first presented to this House in April, 1991 by the previous administration. This will end the need to fund the ongoing operations of government through special warrants.

Approval of this year's appropriations will also require legislation to amend *The Mortgage Protection Act, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act, The Assessment Management Act, The Meewasin Authority Act, The Wakamow Authority Act, The Wascana Authority Act* and others.

My government will present its first budget early in the Spring Session. At that time we will also place before you a legislative agenda which clearly demonstrates the new directions and new priorities of my government.

Taxation

This Legislature will also be asked to repeal legislation which provided for the expansion and harmonization of the provincial sales tax. The elimination of this additional tax burden will safeguard jobs throughout our province and put millions of dollars back into the pockets of Saskatchewan consumers, thereby stimulating the provincial economy.

We will also be seeking approval for several other legislative amendments related to the repeal of this expanded tax including amendments to *The Liquor Consumption Tax Act, The Revenue and Financial Services Act* and *The Income Tax Act.*

My government is very concerned about the fiscal position of the province. Annual deficits must be brought under control and the massive provincial debt must be reduced. My ministers have already announced reductions in spending, and further initiatives in this regard will be announced soon.

My government has also acted to fulfil a major commitment made to the people of this province with the immediate establishment of the Financial Management Review Commission. This independent and non-partisan commission is mandated to open up the financial records of this province and to seek ways to improve the financial accountability and efficiency of government.

Agriculture

Agriculture is another major priority for my government. Every effort will be made to safeguard the family farm. The family farm is vital to our rural way of life and to Saskatchewan's future.

My government is disappointed that federal initiatives in income stabilization for farm families continue to fall far short of the real need. My government will continue to press Ottawa to fulfil its promise to provide farm families with an adequate and immediate cash payment to cover shortfalls from previous crop years. My ministers are also convinced that changes must be made to the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan and the Net Income Stabilization Account.

Within this context, my government has recently participated in a unique lobby to pressure Ottawa to accept its responsibilities. My ministers, together with farmers, farm organizations, and political leaders from across the prairie provinces communicated this urgent message to the federal government. Ottawa has indicated it will examine the situation. This kind of coalition, united in common purpose, is unprecedented. Undoubtably these co-operative efforts will continue.

At the request of agricultural producers, my government has also begun a review of the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan and the Net Income Stabilization Account and we are preparing to negotiate improvements to these programs. We are also engaged in developing initiatives, in consultation with lending institutions and others, to provide badly needed debt relief for our agricultural producers.

Democratic Reform

My government is determined to restore the fundamental principles of democracy. As a first step in this direction, legislation will be introduced to ensure that by-elections are held within six months of a vacancy. A second initiative will provide for the legislative and public consideration of the ward system in municipal elections. Additional democratic reforms will be introduced in the Spring Session after public consultation.

As part of this effort to restore the public's trust in the political leadership and the public service of this province, legislation will be introduced to ensure fairness and common sense as the primary objectives in employment packages for senior public servants.

My government has also initiated the development of a comprehensive Code of Ethics and stringent Conflict of Interest Guidelines for both elected representatives and public servants. Preparations for these initiatives are expected to be complete before the next session of this Legislature.

And finally, my government wishes the newly-elected Speaker success with his important responsibilities to ensure proper decorum in the Assembly. It is my government's objective to restore and enhance the public's respect for this Legislature and all members.

Co-operation and Community

Overcoming the tremendous obstacles facing our province and turning them into opportunities will require that all Saskatchewan people come together in a renewed spirit of co-operation and community. These values have always been and will continue to be the distinguishing characteristics of our people and our province. My government believes that rekindling this spirit of co-operation and renewing this commitment to community will ensure the success of our efforts to rebuild this province.

I leave you now to the business of the Session with full confidence that you will favourably discharge your duties and responsibilities.

May Divine Providence continue to bless our province and guide this Legislature in all its deliberations.